



CHALLENGES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

There is wide gap between social expectations from higher education and the resources provided by the central and the state governments. There is a definite need to identify the strengths, weaknesses of our higher educational system. With the challenges of globalization and info-tech revolution, there is a definite need to improve the quality of higher education in India and make it accessible to every eligible and interested student. The globalized economy provides tremendous opportunities and challenges for our institutions of higher education. At the time of independence in 1947, there were 20 universities and around 550 colleges in the country. Today, there are more than 300 universities and approximately 13,150 affiliated colleges in the country. However, the educational opportunities still remain insufficient for meeting our societal needs. This paper gives an overview of the challenges of higher education in India, covering different aspects and also gives the solutions of these challenges.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, Challenges

1. Introduction

The higher education in India is passing through a critical phase, while on one hand, the demand for well-qualified human resources, research and development has increased, on the other hand, the resources made available for the development of higher education R&D (Research and Development) have been curtailed. The colleges control about 83 percent of the total student-population but have very limited resources for the improvement of quality. In fact, the development of a nation depends on its educational system and the level of its citizens. Within the horizon of education system, higher education occupies a central place. This influences:

- (I) The school education system.
- (II) Generation of knowledge.
- (III) Quality of human resources-social, economical and political policies.
- (IV) Actions of the state and the people.

The system of the higher education certainly affects rest of the systems operating in the country. But while doing so, it also gets influenced by the situations and realities prevalent in other systems. With a view to ensure greater influences of higher education on the rest of systems, it is essential that a positive intervention is attempted.

2. The Aim of Education

According to Huxley "the main purpose of the education is the construction of the character." We must first understand the aim of the education. A student, who wishes to develop and build up character, will learn how to do so from any good book on the subject. The Stage of Higher Education is very important stage of our life. Because In this Stage, the student has the development of socially, religiously, spiritually etc. It is in the hands of the students to make good the defects in their character, for no one else can do this for them. Without proper education and the knowledge acquired through such education, millions can not acquire the true knowledge of the Self.

3. Higher education

Higher education, offers professional/specialized knowledge/qualification in the form of bachelor, post-graduate and doctoral degrees to those who are generally in the age group of 17 to 23 years. However, education, and particularly higher education, is a never-ending /life-long process. One can visualize the need for higher education from different point of views, for people with "educational desire" one may expect "relevant quality education" to day-to-day life/ventures/vocation; whereas, "economic desire" will always favour "generation of funds/reduction of cost"; "political desire" may stress upon "increasing its access for the masses/improving equity"; and lastly "social desire" may call for "unrestricted/fair access/democratization of education."

In 1966 Kothari (Education) Commission pointed out the objectives of higher education as:

- (a) the pursuit of knowledge
- (b) the evolution of right leadership for the future

(c) the training of experts for a developing economy, and

(d) the inculcation of good culture values.

Therefore, broad emphases of Higher Education are on:

- Life-long learning process,
- Development of entire personality with strong sense of values, moral, right attitudes, and
- Entrepreneurial attitude among the educators and its stake-holders-Students, parents, institutions, employees therein, and the Government.

According to a report released by MHRD, the country's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) has grown to 18.8%. Encouraging as it may seem, experts at a panel discussion organized by Delhi School of Business believe that there is still a long way to go in attaining excellence in higher education and a number of loopholes still need to be plugged in.

India			
	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
Undergraduate	12,677	16,521	30.3
Graduate	61,058	85,055	39.3
Non-degree	1,242	1,924	54.9
OPT	27,696	29,388	6.1
Total	102,673	132,888	
UG/G (%)		19%	
OPT/Total (%)		22%	
Non-degree /Total (%)		1%	

Source: Open Doors 2015 | Prepared by DrEducation.com

4. Higher Education: Some Elementary Thoughts

- a. Is it not true that we insist upon repeating mistakes and do not learn from experience?
- b. Excellence or quality means more expenditure, is this concept correct?
- c. Is it true that students do not insist on quality?
- d. The expected fund from the government is a distant reality. Does it mean that we should throw away the object of improving quality of college/ university education?
- e. Less educated people with low cultural level and narrow outlook enter the academic and educational institutions and many people without minimum

requisite qualifications enter the academic profession. How could it be avoided?

- f. The teacher generally assumes that his /her work-load at college ends with the completion of allotted work load of teaching periods. Is this concept correct?
- g. Do we contribute to the overall personality build up of the students?
- h. Teachers evaluate the students. But what about the evaluation of teachers?
- i. Is it true that a teacher can teach till his retirement without having to improve his/her academic competence and without adopting methodological changes in his/her teaching?
- j. Has the unemployment not become an incentive to go for more and higher level of education? This phenomenon is called "Distinguished Unemployment". This is also referred to as "Degree Inflation".

The above questions are complex in nature and it is very difficult to answer them here. But one thing is clear, 'What is happening today is not what we want to happen? The attitudes of the teachers and students and quality of higher education imparted have all constrained us to think about the threats that we are facing.

5. Challenges in Higher Education

1. Directionless Study

In our country, most of the students studying in various institutions of higher education lack proper direction. They pass various examinations without any clear-cut aim in view and hence get frustrated in the beginning of their lives.

2. Study Materials or Curriculum

The higher education in our country suffers from many defects. So far as the curriculum is concerned, excessive stress on theory takes precedence over the practical aspect and forces the students away from the real life. The syllabus lacks integration between general and skill-oriented vocational education. The recent trend of entrance tests have no relevance with the course content taught in the classes.

3. Teaching Pedagogies

Even in the present day, the instruction-method is the pillar of Higher education in our country.

This way, student is not a participant in active teaching-learning process. We have to develop such methods of teaching which involve question-answer discussions and seminars.

4. Teachers

Over the past many years, it has been observed that teaching fraternity is also responsible for the present situation. An ideal teacher is one who is acceptable to the student in respect of his/her command over the subject, his/her philosophy, attitudes and above all his/her behaviour. But many of us serving in various colleges and universities have neither ability nor aptitude for this noble profession. They teach just mechanically. Doubtlessly, a large section of teachers suffer from financial hardships which prevents them from purchasing books and journals required for their professional growth. Physical facilities books and journals required for their professional growth. Physical facilities in many colleges are not adequate for effective teaching.

5. Poor Research Work

The basic aim of higher education is the search for truth-research of high degree and original in nature, but I am sorry to say that research today is suffering on both the counts, i.e., 'Originality and Standard.' The system since past many years has resulted in the emergence of malpractices. This is certainly an attack on our integrity. Strict rules and regulations are required to be followed. Research must be an honest attempt associated with hard work.

6. Medium of Instructions and Examinations

This is also a basic cause of controversial problems in higher education. The student at the undergraduate level learns the subject matter in their regional languages but at the Post-Graduate level, the medium shifts abruptly to English. This is true mostly in Arts subjects. In addition to this, the system of examination is also faulty. The whole system of examination is not only invalid, unreliable and inadequate but also it tends to corrupt the morale of the students. The prevailing system of examination lays undue emphasis eliciting factual information from the students and thus teaching-learning process gets reduced to mere piling up of the information by the students.

7. Economic Conditions

The type of economy we have, the states centre or local self-government do not place adequate funds at the disposal of the institutions of higher education. Despite the fact that the education is on the Concurrent list, the Government at the centre has not done anything worthwhile. The globalization, privatization and above all, commercialization of education are creating more problems than in fact being helpful in bringing excellence in education. In the name of quality

and standardizations of higher education, exorbitant fee is charged thus restricting the common man from getting higher education. Excellence is found only among those who are elite of the society. Coming in of foreign universities in near future will eat up squarely the little of left over socialistic pattern of this country. Only rich can afford higher education and thus higher education will be the prerogative of a few.

8. Much Privatization, less quality

However, there is much privatization but less quality. Because the below reasons might be responsible for it.

- High Fees
- Lack of the presence of the students
- Disqualified teachers
- There are much differences between on paper work and the real work
- Less Salary (On Paper Salary and Real Salary)
- More Private Institutes than the real needs.
- Not regular follows the UGC guidelines, not takes the NAAC Certificates.
- Lack of the originality work
- Not good Infrastructure compare to Fees.

So, there should be done much control on Private Institutions.

9. Scholarships

The person who does not get the scholarship or not JRF or not belongs to SC/ST/OBC/SEBC Category or not does the Job and Parents' Income less, he or she wants to get admission in Higher Education like the Ph.D. what should do for them. We should do many efforts to encourage the higher education in the country. However because of less money the person refuses to get the Higher Education, Especially for the women.

10. Improper Regulation and Control

The state regulation and autonomy of higher education institutions are two poles apart. Either the state controls or it leaves everything to the institutions itself. Now, there is a semantic confusion between regulation and control. State has a responsibility to regulate but university should be given the freedom and autonomy to run itself, manage its own affairs. That does not always happen.

11. Lack of Planning

There is no rational thinking behind planning courses and planning admissions, because everything is allowed to go in different directions within any focus. There is 40 per cent of enrolment, at the higher education level, in general arts, 20 percent in sciences, 20 percent in commerce and around 20 per cent in the professional courses. This leads to imbalances. Similar is the situation with regard to research and training. Research does not have enough funding and enough resources. One should look into the quality of research. No institution has a definite training policy. The Lack of Planning almost sees in the Administration.

6. Solutions of these Problems

Prof. K.R. Ramachandran Nair says, "Educational reforms in developing countries in recent times have shown that it is not education that brings about social changes but it is social change that necessitates reforms and innovations in education. Wide disparities exist between rural and urban areas in the availability of facilities of education and information. As a result of tremendous expansion in the field of higher education, so many problems have emerged".

1. No improvement of quality is possible with corruption all around. Corrupt attitudes, influences and malpractices destroy the entire system of higher education.
2. A student must be free to choose what he wants to learn.
3. A qualitative change in our attitude is a necessary precondition to bring about reforms.
4. Higher education should develop into centres of excellence.
5. In order to improve the qualities of education, all those who are related to educational field should actively participate.
6. College education can be successful if primary, secondary and higher education are interlinked.

7. Conclusion

It is never too late to mend. If the system of higher education is not improved in response to the need of the hour, the preamble promise of justice-social, eco-

conomic and political, equality of status and of opportunity, liberty of thought, faith and worship will ever remain unfulfilled. The aim of higher education should be necessarily broad and dynamic. The universities and colleges of today must work not only for promotion and dissemination of knowledge but also for generation of knowledge. They must promote humanism, reasoning, and tolerance, critical thinking and search for truth. They are expected to achieve new knowledge, understanding, good leadership qualities and equality for their students. Higher education should aim at socialization and democratization in true sense of the word. Lest we forget Dr. S.Radhakrishnan who rightly observed that, "True end of education is not the acquisition of technical skills, though they are essential in modern society. One must have that superior outlook, which goes beyond information and technical skills. True higher education should aim at deepening our insight, widening our horizons and creating a scientific outlook."

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